AREOPAGITICA;

A

SPEECH

FOR THE

LIBERTY

OF

UNLICENSED PRINTING,

TO THE

PARLIAMENT of ENGLAND.

By JOHN MILTON.

Τἐλέυθερον δ' ἐκεῖνο, εἴ τις θέλει πόλει
Χρηστόν τι βἐλευμ' εἰς μέσον φέρειν, ἔχων.
Καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων, λαμπρὸς ἔσθ', ὁ μὴ θέλων,
Σιγᾶ, τί τούτων ἔστιν ἰσαίτερον πόλει;

EURIPID. Hicetid.

This is true Liberty when free-born Men
Having to adviſe the Public may ſpeak free,
Which he who can, and will, deſerves high Praiſe,
Who neither can, nor will may hold his Peace;
What can be juſter in a State than this?

EURIPID. Hicetid.

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M.DCC.XCII.

MILTON's AREOPAGITICA *has not, I believe, been ever before reprinted ſeparately from his other proſe works; at leaſt it is not now to be met with in the Bookſellers ſhops. As it is a treatiſe in every reſpect worthy of its author, I need make no apology for giving it in this form to the Public. The circulation of every thing which can explain the true principles of the liberty of the preſs, which is the watch and guardian of all other liberty, muſt be always uſeful; and is at this period peculiarly neceſſary. For though the power, which the Judges had uſurped in caſes of libels has been wreſted from them, and reſtored to its only proper tribunal a Jury of the country; yet it is impoſſible that any civil bleſſing can be long ſecure, unleſs it is juſtly valued by the underſtanding, and protected by the ſpirit of the people.*

FOR THE

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UNLICENSED PRINTING.

THEY who to States and Governors of the Commonwealth direct their ſpeech, High Court of Parliament! or wanting ſuch acceſs in a private condition, write that which they forſee may advance the public good; I ſuppoſe them as at the beginning of no mean endeavour, not a little altered and moved inwardly in their minds: ſome with doubt of what will be the ſucceſs, others with fear of what will be the cenſure; ſome with hope, others with confidence of what they have to ſpeak. And me perhaps each of theſe diſpoſitions, as the ſubject was whereon I entered, may have at other times variouſly affected; and likely might in theſe foremoſt expreſſions, now alſo diſcloſe which of them ſwayed moſt, but that the very attempt of this addreſs thus made, and the thought of whom it

hath recourſe to, hath got the power within me to a paſſion, far more welcome than incidental to a preface. Which though I ſtay not to confeſs ere any aſk, I ſhall be blameleſs, if it be no other, than the joy and gratulation which it brings to all who wiſh and promote their country's liberty; whereof this whole diſcourſe propoſed will be a certain teſtimony, if not a trophy. For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever ſhall ariſe in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this world expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply conſidered and ſpeedily reformed, then is the utmoſt bound of civil liberty attained, that wiſe men look for. To which I now manifeſt by the very ſound of this which I ſhall utter, that we are already in good part arrived, and yet from ſuch a ſteep diſadvantage of tyranny and ſuperſtition grounded into our principles, as was beyond the manhood of a *Roman* recovery, it will be attributed firſt, as is moſt due, to the ſtrong aſſiſtance of God our deliverer, next, to your faithful guidance and undaunted wiſdom, Lords and Commons of *England!* Neither is it in God's eſteem, the diminution of his glory, when honorable things are ſpoken of good men and worthy magiſtrates; which if I now firſt ſhould begin to do, after ſo fair a progreſs of your laudable deeds, and ſuch a long obligement upon the whole realm to your indefatigable virtues, I might be juſtly reckoned among the tardieſt and unwillingeſt of them that praiſe ye. Nevertheleſs, there being three principal things,

without

without which all praiſing is but courtſhip and flattery, *firſt* when that only is praiſed which is ſolidly worth praiſe; *next* when greateſt likelihoods are brought, that ſuch things are truly and really in thoſe perſons to whom they are aſcribed; the *other* when he who praiſes, by ſhewing that ſuch his actual perſuaſion is of whom he writes, can demonſtrate that he flatters not: the former two of theſe I have heretofore endeavoured, reſcuing the employment from him who went about to impair your merits with a trivial and malignant *Encomium*; the latter, as belonging chiefly to mine own acquittal, that whom I ſo extolled I did not flatter, hath been reſerved opportunely to this occaſion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the beſt covenant of his fidelity; and that his loyaleſt affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His higheſt praiſing is not flattery, and his plaineſt advice is a kind of praiſing; for though I ſhould affirm and hold by argument, that it would fare better with truth, with learning and the Commonwealth, if one of your publiſhed orders, which I ſhould name, were called in, yet at the ſame time it would not but much redound to the luſtre of your mild and equal government, whenas private perſons are hereby animated to think ye better pleaſed with public advice, than other Statiſts have been delighted heretofore with public flattery. And men will then ſee what difference there is between the magnanimity of a

Triennial Parliament, and that jealous haughtineſs of *Prelates* and cabin Counſellors that uſurped of late, whenas they ſhall obſerve, ye in the midſt of your victories and ſucceſſes more gently brooking written exceptions againſt a voted order, than other courts, which had produced nothing worth memory but the weak oſtentation of wealth, would have endured the leaſt ſignified diſlike at any ſudden proclamation. If I ſhould thus far preſume upon the meek demeanour of your civil and gentle greatneſs, Lords and Commons, as what your publiſhed order hath directly ſaid, that to gainſay, I might defend myſelf with eaſe, if any ſhould accuſe me of being new or inſolent, did they but know how much better I find ye eſteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of *Greece*, than the Babaric pride of a *Hunniſh* and *Norwegian* ſtatelineſs. And out of thoſe ages, to whoſe polite wiſdom and letters we owe that we are not yet *Goths* and *Jutlanders*, I could name him who from his private houſe wrote that diſcouſe to the parliament of *Athens*, that perſuades them to change the form of *democracy*, which was then eſtabliſhed. Such honor was done in thoſe days to men who profeſſed the ſtudy of wiſdom and eloquence, not only in their own country, but in other lands, that cities and ſigniories heard them gladly, and with great reſpect, if they had aught in public to admoniſh the State. Thus did *Dion Pruſæus*, a ſtranger and a private orator, counſel the *Rhodians* againſt a former edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to ſet here would be ſuperfluous.

ſuperfluous. But if from the induſtry of a life wholly dedicated to ſtudious labours, and thoſe natural endowments haply not the worſt for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude, ſo much muſt be derogated, as to count me not equal to any of thoſe who had this privilege, I would obtain to be thought not ſo inferior, as yourſelves are ſuperior to the moſt of them who received their counſel: and how far you excel them, be aſſured, Lords and Commons, there can no greater teſtimony appear, than when your prudent ſpirit acknowledges and obeys the voice of reaſon from what quarter ſoever it be heard ſpeaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any act of your own ſetting forth, as any ſet forth by your predeceſſors.

If ye be thus reſolved, as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what ſhould withhold me from preſenting ye with a fit inſtance wherein to ſhew both that love of truth which ye eminently profeſs, and that uprightneſs of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourſelves; by judging over again that order which ye have ordained *to regulate printing: That no book, pamphlet, or paper ſhall be henceforth printed, unleſs the ſame be firſt approved and licenſed by ſuch*, or at leaſt one of ſuch as ſhall be thereto appointed. For that part which preſerves juſtly every man's copy to himſelf, or provides for the poor, I touch not; only wiſh they be not made pretences to abuſe and perſecute honeſt and painful men, who offend not in either of theſe particulars. But that other clauſe

of licenſing books, which we thought had died with his brother *Quadrageſimal* and *Matrimonial*, when the *Prelates* expired, I ſhall now attend with ſuch a homily, as ſhall lay before ye, firſt, the inventors of it to be thoſe whom ye will be loth to own; next, what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever ſorts the books be; and that this order avails nothing to the ſuppreſſing of ſcandalous, ſeditious and libellous books, which were mainly intended to be ſuppreſt. *Laſtly* that it will be primely to the diſcouragement of all learning, and the ſtop of truth, not only by dis-exerciſing and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindring and cropping the diſcovery that might be yet further made, both in religious and civil wiſdom.

I deny not, but that it is of great concernment in the church and commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themſelves as well as men; and hereafter to confine, impriſon and do ſharpeſt juſtice on them as malefactors: for books are not abſolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that ſoul was, whoſe progeny they are; nay they do preſerve, as in a vial, the pureſt efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively and as vigorouſly productive, as thoſe fabulous dragons teeth; and being ſown up and down, may chance to ſpring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unleſs warineſs be uſed, as good almoſt kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills

kills a reaſonable creature, God's image; but he who deſtroys a good book, kills reaſon itſelf, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a maſter ſpirit, imbalmed and treaſured up on purpoſe to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can reſtore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loſs; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loſs of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worſe. We ſhould be wary therefore what perſecution we raiſe againſt the living labors of public men, how we ſpill that ſeaſoned life of man preſerved and ſtored up in books; ſince we ſee a kind of homicide may be thus committed, ſometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impreſſion, a kind of maſſacre, whereof the execution ends not in the ſlaying of an elemental life, but ſtrikes at that æthereal and fifth eſſence, the breath of reaſon itſelf; ſlays an immortality rather than a life. But leſt I ſhould be condemned of introducing licenſe, while I oppoſe licenſing, I refuſe not the pains to be ſo much hiſtorical, as will ſerve to ſhew what hath been done by ancient and famous commonwealths, againſt this diſorder, till the very time that this project of licenſing crept out of the *inquiſition*, was catched up by our *Prelates*, and hath caught ſome of our *Preſbyters*.

In *Athens*, where books and wits were ever buſier than in any other part of *Greece*, I find but only two ſorts of writings which the Magiſ-

trate cared to take notice of; thoſe either blaſphemous and atheiſtical, or libellous. Thus the books of *Protagoras* were by the Judges of *Areopagus* commanded to be burnt, and himſelf baniſhed the territory for a diſcourſe begun with his confeſſing not to know, *whether there were Gods, or whether not.* And againſt defaming, it was decreed that none ſhould be traduced by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comœdia*, whereby we may gueſs how they cenſured libelling: and this courſe was quick enough, as *Cicero* writes, to quell both the deſperate wits of other *Atheiſts*, and the open way of defaming, as the event ſhewed. Of other ſects and opinions, though tending to voluptuouſneſs, and the denying of divine Providence they took no heed. Therefore we do not read, that either *Epicurus*, or that libertine ſchool of *Cyrene*, or what the *Cynic* impudence uttered, was ever queſtioned by the laws. Neither is it recorded, that the writings of thoſe old *Comedians* were ſuppreſſed, though the acting of them were forbid; and that *Plato* commended the reading of *Ariſtophanes*, the looſeſt of them all, to his royal ſcholar *Dionyſius*, is commonly known, and may be excuſed, if holy *Chryſoſtom*, as is reported, nightly ſtudied ſo much the ſame author, and had the art to cleanſe a ſcurrilous vehemence, into the ſtile of a rouſing ſermon. That other leading city of *Greece*, *Lacedæmon*, conſidering, that *Lycurgus* their lawgiver was ſo addicted to elegant learning, as to have been the firſt that brought out of *Ionia* the

ſcattered

ſcattered works of *Homer*, and ſent the poet *Thales* from *Crete* to prepare and mollify the *Spartan* ſurlineſs with his ſmooth ſongs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility; it is to be wondered, how muſeleſs and unbookiſh they were, minding nought but the feats of war. There needed no licenſing of books among them, for they diſliked all but their own *Laconic apothegms*, and took a ſlight occaſion to chace *Archilocus* out of their city, perhaps for compoſing in a higher ſtrain than their own ſoldierly ballads and roundels could reach to: or if it were for his broad verſes, they were not therein ſo cautious, but they were as diſſolute in their promiſcuous converſing; whence *Euripides* affirms in *Andromache*, that their women were all unchaſte. Thus much may give us light after what ſort books were prohibited among the *Greeks*. The *Romans* alſo for many ages, trained up only to a military roughneſs, reſembling moſt the *Lacedæmonian* guiſe, knew of learning little, but what their twelve tables and the *Pontific* college with their *Augurs* and *Flamins* taught them in religion and law, ſo unacquainted with other learning, that when *Carneades* and *Critolaus*, with the *Stoic Diogenes* coming ambaſſadors to *Rome*, took thereby occaſion to give the city a taſte of their philoſophy, they were ſuſpected for ſeducers by no leſs a man than *Cato* the cenſor, who moved it in the Senate to diſmiſs them ſpeedily, and to baniſh all ſuch *Attic* babblers out of *Italy*. But *Scipio* and others of the nobleſt ſenators withſtood

withſtood him and his old *Sabin* auſterity; honoured and admired the men; and the cenſor himſelf at laſt in his old age fell to the ſtudy of that whereof before he was ſo ſcrupulous. And yet at the ſame time *Nævius* and *Plautus*, the firſt *Latin* comedians, had filled the city with all the borrowed ſcenes of *Menander* and *Philemon*. Then began to be conſidered there alſo what was to be done to libellous books and authors; for *Nævius* was quickly caſt into priſon for his unbridled pen, and releaſed by the *Tribunes* upon his recantation: we read alſo that libels were burnt, and the makers puniſhed by *Auguſtus*. The like ſeverity no doubt was uſed, if ought were impiouſly written, againſt their eſteemed Gods. Except in theſe two points, how the world went in books, the Magiſtrate kept no reckoning. And therefore *Lucretius* without impeachment verſifies his Epicuriſm to *Memmius*, and had the honour to be ſet forth the ſecond time by *Cicero*, ſo great a father of the commonwealth; although himſelf diſputes againſt that opinion in his own writings. Nor was the ſatirical ſharpneſs, or naked plainneſs of *Lucilius*, or *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*, by any order prohibited. And for matters of ſtate, the ſtory of *Titus Livius*, though it extolled that part which *Pompey* held, was not therefore ſuppreſſed by *Octavius Cæſar* of the other faction. But that *Naſo* was by him baniſhed in his old age, for the wanton poems of his youth, was but a meer covert of ſtate over ſome ſecret cauſe: and beſides, the books were

neither

neither baniſhed nor called in. From hence we ſhall meet with little elſe but tyranny in the *Roman* empire, that we may not marvel, if not ſo often bad, as good books were ſilenced. I ſhall therefore deem to have been large enough in producing what among the ancients was puniſhable to write, ſave only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time the Emperors were become Chriſtians, whoſe diſcipline in this point I do not find to have been more ſevere than what was formerly in practice. The books of thoſe whom they took to be grand *Heretics* were examined, refuted and condemned in the general councils; and not till then were prohibited, or burnt by authority of the Emperor. As for the writings of *Heathen* authors, unleſs they were plain invectives againſt Chriſtianity, as thoſe of *Porphyrius* and *Proclus*, they met with no interdict that can be cited, till about the year 400, in a *Carthaginian* council wherein Biſhops themſelves were forbid to read the books of *Gentiles*, but hereſies they might read: while others long before them, on the contrary, ſcrupled more the books of *Heretics* than of *Gentiles*. And that the primitive councils and Biſhops were wont only to declare, what books were not commendable, paſſing no further, but leaving it to each one's conſcience to read or to lay by, till after the year 800, is obſerved already by *Padre Paolo*, the great unmaſker of the *Trentine* council. After which time the Popes of *Rome* engroſſing what they pleaſed of political rule into their own hand

hands, extended their dominion over mens eyes, as they had before over their judgments, burning and prohibiting to be read what they fancied not; yet ſparing in their cenſures, and the books not many which they ſo dealt with: till *Martin* V. by his bull not only prohibited, but was the firſt that excommunicated the reading of *Heretical* books; for about that time *Wickliff* and *Huſſe* growing terrible, were they who firſt drove the *Papal* court to a ſtricter policy of prohibiting. Which courſe *Leo* X. and his ſucceſſors followed until the council of *Trent*, and the *Spaniſh* Inquiſition engendering together brought forth or perfected thoſe catalogues, and expurging indexes, that rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worſe than any could be offered to his tomb. Nor did they ſtay in matters *Heretical*, but any ſubject that was not to their palate, they either condemned in a prohibition, or had it ſtraight into the new purgatory of an index. To fill up the meaſure of encroachment, their laſt invention was to ordain, that no book, pamphlet or paper ſhould be printed (as if St. *Peter* had bequeathed them the keys of the preſs as well as of Paradiſe) unleſs it were approved and licenſed under the hand of two or three gluttonous *Friers*. For example:

Let the Chancellor *Cini* be pleaſed to ſee if in this preſent work be contained ought that may withſtand the printing;

Vincent Rabatta, Vicar of *Florence*.

I have

I have ſeen this preſent work, and find nothing athwart the Catholic faith and good manners: In witneſs whereof I have given, *&c.*

Nicolo Cini, Chancellor of *Florence.*

Attending the precedent relation, it is allowed that this preſent work of *Davanzati* may be printed,

Vincent Rabatta, &c.

It may be printed, *July* 15,

Friar *Simon Mompei d'Amelia,* Chancellor of the Holy Office in *Florence.*

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomleſs pit had not long ſince broke priſon, that this quadruple exorciſm would bar him down. I fear, their next deſign will be to get into their cuſtody the licenſing of that which they ſay * *Claudius* intended, but went not through with. Vouchſafe to ſee another of their forms, the *Roman* ſtamp:

Imprimatur, If it ſeem good to the Reverend Maſter of the Holy Palace,

Belcaſtro, Vicegerent.

Imprimatur,

Friar *Nicolo Rodolphi,* Maſter of the Holy Palace.

Sometimes five *Imprimaturs* are ſeen together dialogue-wiſe in the piazza of one title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their ſhaven reverences, whether the author, who ſtands by

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* Quo veniam daret flatum, crepitumque ventris in convivio emittendi. SUETON. in CLAUD.

by in perplexity at the foot of his epiſtle, ſhall to the preſs or to the ſpunge. Theſe are the pretty reſponſories, theſe are the dear *antiphonies* that ſo bewitched of late our prelates, and their chaplains, with the goodly echo they made; and beſotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*, one from *Lambeth*-houſe, another from the *weſt* end of *Paul's;* ſo apiſhly Romanizing, that the word of command ſtill was ſet down in *Latin;* as if the learned grammatical pen that wrote it, would caſt no ink without *Latin:* or perhaps, as they thought, becauſe no vulgar tongue was worthy to expreſs the pure conceit of an *Imprimatur;* but rather, as I hope, for that our *Engliſh*, the language of men ever famous and foremoſt in the atchievements of Liberty, will not eaſily find ſervile letters enow to ſpell ſuch a dictatory preſumption Engliſhed. And thus ye have the inventors and the original of book-licenſing ripped up, and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any ancient ſtate, or polity, or church, nor by any ſtatute left us by our anceſtors elder or later; nor from the modern cuſtom of any reformed city, or church abroad; but from the moſt antichriſtian council, and the moſt tyrannous inquiſition that ever inquired. Till then, books were ever as freely admitted into the world as any other birth; the iſſue of the brain was no more ſtifled than the iſſue of the womb. No envious *Juno* ſat croſs-legged over the nativity of any man's intellectual offspring; but if it proved a monſter, who denies, but that it was juſtly burnt,

or

or ſunk into the ſea? But that a book in worſe condition than a peccant ſoul, ſhould be to ſtand before a jury ere it be born to the world, and undergo yet in darkneſs the judgment of *Radamanth* and his colleagues, ere it can paſs the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that myſterious iniquity provoked and troubled at the firſt entrance of reformation, ſought out new limbos and new hells wherein they might include our books alſo within the number of their damned. And this was the rare morſel ſo officiouſly ſnatched up, and ſo ill-favouredly imitated by our inquiſiturient Biſhops, and the attendant minorites their chaplains. That ye like not now theſe moſt certain authors of this licenſing order, and that all ſiniſter intention was far diſtant from your thoughts, when ye were importuned the paſſing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honour truth, will clear ye readily.

But ſome will ſay, What though the inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good? It may ſo; yet if that thing be no ſuch deep invention, but obvious and eaſy for any man to light on, and yet beſt and wiſeſt commonwealths through all ages and occaſions have forborne to uſe it, and falſeſt ſeducers and oppreſſors of men were the firſt who took it up, and to no other purpoſe but to obſtruct and hinder the firſt approach of reformation; I am of thoſe who believe, it will be a harder alchemy than *Lullius* ever knew, to ſublimate any good uſe out of ſuch an invention.

Yet

Yet this only is what I requeſt to gain from this reaſon, that it may be held a dangerous and ſuſpicious fruit, as certainly it deſerves, for the tree that bore it, until I can diſſect one by one the properties it has. But I have firſt to finiſh, as was propounded, what is to be thought in general of reading books, whatever ſort they be, and whether be more the benefit, or the harm that thence proceeds?

Not to inſiſt upon the Examples of *Moſes*, *Daniel* and *Paul*, who were ſkilful in all the learning of the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans* and *Greeks*, which could not probably be without reading their books of all ſorts, in *Paul* eſpecially, who thought it no defilement to inſert into holy ſcripture the ſentences of three *Greek* poets, and one of them a *Tragedian*; the queſtion was, notwithſtanding, ſometimes controverted among the primitive doctors, but with great odds on that ſide which affirmed it both lawful and profitable, as was then evidently perceived, when *Julian* the apoſtate, and ſubtleſt enemy to our faith, made a decree forbidding Chriſtians the ſtudy of heathen learning: for, ſaid he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and ſciences they overcome us. And indeed the Chriſtians were put ſo to their ſhifts by this crafty means, and ſo much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two *Apolinarii* were fain, as a man may ſay, to coin all the ſeven liberal ſciences out of the bible, reducing it into divers forms of orations, poems, dialogues, even to the calculating

of

of a new Chriſtian grammar. But, ſaith the hiſtorian *Socrates*, the providence of God provided better than the induſtry of *Apollinarius* and his ſon, by taking away that illiterate law with the life of him who deviſed it. So great an injury they then held it to be deprived of *Hellenic* learning; and thought it a perſecution more undermining, and ſecretly decaying the church, than the open cruelty of *Decius* or *Dioclesian*. And perhaps it was the ſame politic drift that the Devil whipped St. *Jerome* in a lenten dream, for reading *Cicero*; or elſe it was a fantaſy bred by the fever which had then ſeized him. For had an angel been his diſcipliner, unleſs it were for dwelling too much upon *Ciceronianiſms*, and had chaſtiſed the reading, not the vanity, it had been plainly partial; *firſt*, to correct him for grave *Cicero*, and not for ſcurril *Plautus*, whom he confeſſes to have been reading not long before; *next*, to correct him only, and let ſo many more ancient fathers wax old in thoſe pleaſant and florid ſtudies without the laſh of ſuch a tutoring apparition; inſomuch that *Baſil* teaches how ſome good uſe may be made of *Margites* a ſportful poem, not now extant, writ by *Homer*; and why not then of *Morgante* an *Italian* romance much to the ſame purpoſe? But if it be agreed we ſhall be tried by viſions, there is a viſion recorded by *Euſebius*, far ancienter than this tale of *Jerome*, to the nun *Euſtochium*, and beſides has nothing of a fever in it. *Dionyſius Alexandrinus* was about the year 240, a perſon of great name in the church

for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himſelf much againſt *Heretics* by being converſant in their books; until a certain *Preſbyter* laid it ſcrupulouſly to his conſcience, how he durſt venture himſelf among thoſe defiling volumes. The worthy man loth to give offence, fell into a new debate with himſelf what was to be thought; when ſuddenly a viſion ſent from God, (it is his own epiſtle that ſo avers it,) confirmed him in theſe words: "Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for "thou art ſufficient both to judge aright, and to "examine each matter." To this revelation he aſſented the ſooner, as he confeſſes, becauſe it was anſwerable to that of the *Apoſtle* to the *Theſſalonians*, "Prove all things, hold faſt that which is "good." And he might have added another remarkable ſaying of the ſame author: "To the pure all "things are pure," not only meats and drinks, but all kind of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor conſequently the books, if the will and conſcience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are; ſome of good, ſome of evil ſubſtance; and yet God in that unapocryphal viſion, ſaid, without exception; "Riſe "*Peter*, kill and eat," leaving the choice to each man's diſcretion. Wholeſome meats to a vitiated ſtomach differ little or nothing from unwholeſome; and beſt books to a naughty mind are not unappliable to occaſions of evil. Bad meats will ſcarce breed good nouriſhment in the healthieſt concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that

that they to a diſcreet and judicious reader ſerve in many reſpects to diſcover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illuſtrate. Whereof what better witneſs can ye expect I ſhould produce, than one of your own now ſitting in parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. *Selden*; whoſe volume of natural and national laws, proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquiſite reaſons and theorems almoſt mathematically demonſtrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read and collated, are of main ſervice and aſſiſtance toward the ſpeedy attainment of what is trueſt. I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the univerſal diet of man's body, (ſaving ever the rules of temperance,) he then alſo, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repaſting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exerciſe his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man? Yet God commits the managing ſo great a truſt, without particular law or preſcription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when he himſelf tabled the *Jews* from heaven, that *omer* which was every man's daily portion of *manna*, is computed to have been more than might have well ſufficed the heartieſt feeder thrice as many meals. For thoſe actions which enter into a man, rather than iſſue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uſes not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of preſcription, but truſts him

with the gift of reaſon to be his own chuſer: there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulſion ſhould grow ſo faſt upon thoſe things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. *Solomon* informs us, that much reading is a wearineſs to the fleſh; but neither he, nor other inſpired author tells us, that ſuch, or ſuch reading is unlawful: yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful, than what was weariſome. As for the burning of thoſe *Epheſian* books by St. *Paul's* converts, it is replied, the books were *magic*, the *Syriac* ſo renders them. It was a private act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorſe burnt thoſe books which were their own; the magiſtrate by this example is not appointed: theſe men practiſed the books, another might perhaps have read them in ſome ſort uſefully. Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almoſt inſeparably: and the knowledge of good is ſo involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in ſo many cunning reſemblances hardly to be diſcerned, that thoſe confuſed ſeeds which were impoſed on *Pſyche* as an inceſſant labour to cull out, and ſort aſunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple taſted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to ſay, of knowing good

good by evil. As therefore the ſtate of man now is; what wiſdom can there be to chuſe, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and conſider vice with all her baits and ſeeming pleaſures, and yet abſtain, and yet diſtinguiſh, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Chriſtian. I cannot praiſe a fugitive and cloiſtered virtue, unexerciſed and unbreathed, that never ſallies out and ſees her adverſary, but ſlinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without duſt and heat. Aſſuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmoſt that vice promiſes to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure, her whiteneſs is but an excremental whiteneſs: which was the reaſon why our ſage and ſerious poet *Spencer*, (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than *Scotus* or *Aquinas*,) deſcribing true temperance under the perſon of *Guion*, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of *Mammon*, and the bower of earthly bliſs, that he might ſee and know, and yet abſtain. Since therefore the knowledge and ſurvey of vice is in this world ſo neceſſary to the conſtituting of human virtue, and the ſcanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more ſafely, and with leſs danger ſcout into the regions of ſin and

falſity, than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reaſon? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiſcuouſly read. But of the harm that may reſult hence, three kinds are uſually reckoned. *Firſt*, is feared the infection that may ſpread; but then all human learning and controverſy in religious points muſt remove out of the world, yea the bible itſelf; for that oftimes relates blaſphemy not nicely, it deſcribes the carnal ſenſe of wicked men not elegantly, it brings in holieſt men paſſionately murmuring againſt Providence through all the arguments of *Epicurus:* in other great diſputes it anſwers dubiouſly and darkly to the common reader: and aſk a *Talmudiſt*, what ails the modeſty of his marginal *Keri*, that *Moſes* and all the prophets cannot perſuade him to pronounce the textual *Chetiv*. For theſe cauſes we all know the bible itſelf put by the papiſt into the firſt rank of prohibited books. The ancienteſt fathers muſt be next removed, as *Clement* of *Alexandria*, and that *Euſebian* book of evangelic preparation, tranſmitting our ears through a hoard of heatheniſh obſcenities to receive the goſpel. Who finds not that *Irenæus*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerome* and others, diſcover more hereſies than they well confute, and that oft for hereſy which is the truer opinion? Nor boots it to ſay for theſe, and all the *Heathen* writers of greateſt infection, if it muſt be thought ſo, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue,

tongue, ſo long as we are ſure thoſe languages are known as well to the worſt of men, who are both moſt able, and moſt diligent to inſtil the poiſon they ſuck, firſt into the courts of princes, acquainting them with the choiceſt delights and criticiſms of ſin. As perhaps did that *Petronius*, whom *Nero* called his *arbiter*, the maſter of his revels; and that notorious ribald of *Arezzo*, dreaded, and yet dear to the *Italian* courtiers. I name not him for poſterity's ſake, whom *Harry* the VIII. named in merriment his Vicar of Hell. By which compendious way all the contagion that foreign books can infuſe, will find a paſſage to the people far eaſier and ſhorter than an *Indian* voyage, though it could be ſailed either by the *North*, of *Cataio Eaſtward*, or of *Canada Weſtward*, while our *Spaniſh* licenſing gags the *Engliſh* preſs never ſo ſeverely. But on the other ſide, that infection which is from books of controverſy in religion, is more doubtful and dangerous to the learned, than to the ignorant; and yet thoſe books muſt be permitted untouched by the licenſer. It will be hard to inſtance where any ignorant man hath been ever ſeduced by *Papiſtical* books in *Engliſh*, unleſs it were commended and expounded to him by ſome of that clergy: and indeed all ſuch tractates, whether falſe or true, are as the propheſy of *Iſaiah* was to the *Eunuch*, "not to be underſtood without a guide." But of our Prieſts and Doctors, how many have been corrupted by ſtudying the comments of *Jeſuits* and *Sorboniſts*, and how faſt they could transfuſe that

corruption into the people, our experience is both late and ſad. It is not forgot, ſince the acute and diſtinct *Arminius* was perverted merely by the peruſing of a nameleſs diſcourſe written at *Delft*, which at firſt he took in hand to confute. Seeing therefore that thoſe books, and thoſe in great abundance which are likelieſt to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be ſuppreſſed without the fall of learning, and of all ability in diſputation, and that theſe books of either ſort are moſt and ſooneſt catching to the learned, (from whom to the common people whatever is heretical or diſſolute may quickly be conveyed,) and that evil manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thouſand other ways which cannot be ſtopped, and evil doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might alſo do without writing, and ſo beyond prohibiting; I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous enterpriſe of licenſing can be exempted from the number of vain and impoſſible attempts. And he who were pleaſantly diſpoſed, could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man, who thought to pound up the crows by ſhutting his park-gate. Beſides another inconvenience, if learned men be the firſt receivers out of books and diſpreaders both of vice and error, how ſhall the licenſers themſelves be confided in, unleſs we can confer upon them, or they aſſume to themſelves above all others in the land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedneſs? And again, if it be true, that a wiſe man like a good refiner can gather gold out

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of the droſſieſt volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the beſt book, yea or without book, there is no reaſon that we ſhould deprive a wiſe man of any advantage to his wiſdom, while we ſeek to reſtrain from a fool, that which being reſtrained will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there ſhould be ſo much exactneſs always uſed to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we ſhould in the judgment of *Ariſtotle* not only, but of *Solomon* and of our Saviour, not vouchſafe him good precepts, and by conſequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wiſe man will make better uſe of an idle pamphlet, than a fool will do of ſacred ſcripture. It is next alledged, we muſt not expoſe ourſelves to temptations without neceſſity, and next to that, not employ our time in vain things. To both theſe objections one anſwer will ſerve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men ſuch books are not temptations nor vanities; but uſeful drugs and materials, wherewith to temper and compoſe effective and ſtrong medicines, which man's life cannot want. The reſt, as children and childiſh men, who have not the art to qualify and prepare theſe working minerals, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hindered forcibly they cannot be, by all the licenſing that ſainted inquiſition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promiſed to deliver next, that this order of licenſing conduces nothing to the end for which it was framed; and hath almoſt prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath been explaining. See the

ingenuity

ingenuity of truth, who when ſhe gets a free and willing hand, opens herſelf faſter than the pace of method and diſcourſe can overtake her. It was the taſk which I began with, to ſhew that no nation or well inſtituted ſtate, if they valued books at all, did ever uſe this way of licenſing; and it may be anſwered, that this is a piece of prudence lately diſcovered. To which I return, that as it was a thing ſlight and obvious to think on, ſo if it had been difficult to find out, there wanted not among them long ſince who ſuggeſted ſuch a courſe; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgment, that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cauſe of their not uſing it. *Plato*, a man of high authority indeed, but leaſt of all for his commonwealth, in the book of his laws, which no city ever yet received, fed his fancy with making many edicts to his airy burgomaſters, which they who otherwiſe admire him, wiſh had been rather buried and excuſed in the *genial* cups of an *academic* night-ſitting. By which laws he ſeems to tolerate no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, conſiſting moſt of practical traditions, to the attainment whereof a library of ſmaller bulk than his own dialogues would be abundant. And there alſo enacts, that no poet ſhould ſo much as read to any private man what he had written, until the judges and law-keepers had ſeen it, and allowed it: but that *Plato* meant this law peculiarly to that commonwealth which he had imagined, and to no other, is evident. Why was he not elſe a

a law-giver

a law-giver to himſelf, but a tranſgreſſor, and to be expelled by his own magiſtrates; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made, and his perpetual reading of *Sophron Mimus* and *Ariſtophanes*, books of groſſeſt infamy, and alſo for commending the latter of them, though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the tyrant *Dionyſius*, who had little need of ſuch traſh to ſpend his time on? But that he knew, this licenſing of poems had reference and dependance to many other proviſos there ſet down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place: and ſo neither he himſelf nor any magiſtrate or city ever imitated that courſe, which taken apart from thoſe other collateral injunctions muſt needs be vain and fruitleſs. For if they fell upon one kind of ſtrictneſs, unleſs their care were equal to regulate all other things of like aptneſs to corrupt the mind, that ſingle endeavour they knew would be but a fond labor; to ſhut and fortify one gate againſt corruption, and be neceſſitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we muſt regulate all recreations and paſtimes, all that is delightful to man. No muſic muſt be heard, no ſong be ſet or ſung, but what is grave and *Doric*. There muſt be licenſing dancers, that no geſture, motion or deportment ſhall be taught our youth, but what by their allowance be thought honeſt; for ſuch *Plato* was provided of: it will aſk more than the work of twenty licenſers to examine all the lutes, the

the violins, and the guitars in every houſe; they muſt not be ſuffered to prattle as they do, but muſt be licenſed what they may ſay. And who ſhall ſilence all the airs and madrigals, that whiſper ſoftneſs in chambers? The windows alſo and the balconies muſt be thought on, there are ſhrewd books with dangerous frontiſpieces ſet to ſale; who ſhall prohibit them? Shall twenty licenſers? The villages alſo muſt have their viſitors to enquire what lectures the bag-pipe and the rebbec read, even to the ballatry, and gamot of every *municipal* fidler, for theſe are the countryman's *Arcadias* and his *Monte mayors*. *Next*, what more national corruption, for which *England* hears ill abroad, than houſhold gluttony, who ſhall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what ſhall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent thoſe houſes where drunkenneſs is ſold and harboured? Our garments alſo ſhould be referred to the licenſing of ſome more ſober work-maſters, to ſee them cut into a leſs wanton garb. Who ſhall regulate all the mixed converſation of our youth, male and female together, as is the faſhion of this country, who ſhall ſtill appoint what ſhall be diſcourſed, what preſumed, and no farther? *Laſtly*, who ſhall forbid and ſeparate all idle reſort, all evil company? Theſe things will be and muſt be; but how they ſhall be leaſt hurtful, how leaſt enticing, herein conſiſts the grave and governing wiſdom of a ſtate. To ſequeſter out of the world into *Atlantic* and *Eutopian* polities, which never can be drawn into uſe, will not mend our condition;

condition; but to ordain wiſely as in this world of evil, in the midſt whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it *Plato's* licenſing of books will do this, which neceſſarily pulls along with it ſo many other kinds of licenſing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet fruſtrate; but thoſe unwritten, or at leaſt, unconſtraining laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which *Plato* there mentions, as the bonds and ligaments of the commonwealth, the pillars and the ſuſtainers of every written ſtatute; theſe they be which will bear chief ſway in ſuch matters as theſe, when all licenſing will be eaſily eluded. Impunity and remiſſneſs for certain are the bane of a commonwealth, but here the great art lies to diſcern in what the law is to bid reſtraint and puniſhment, and in what things perſuaſion only is to work. If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance and preſcription and compulſion, what were virtue but a name, what praiſe could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy to be ſober, juſt or continent? Many there be that complain of divine Providence for ſuffering *Adam* to tranſgreſs. Fooliſh Tongues! When God gave him reaſon, he gave him freedom to chooſe, for reaſon is but chooſing; he had been elſe a meer artificial *Adam*, ſuch an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We ourſelves eſteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift which is of force: God therefore left him free, ſet before him a provoking object, ever almoſt in his eyes; herein conſiſted his merit, herein the right of his reward,

reward, the praiſe of his abſtinence. Wherefore did he create paſſions within us, pleaſures round about us, but that theſe rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? They are not ſkilful conſiderers of human things, who imagine to remove ſin by removing the matter of ſin; for, beſides that it is a huge heap increaſing under the very act of diminiſhing, though ſome part of it may for a time be withdrawn from ſome perſons, it cannot from all, in ſuch an univerſal thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the ſin remains intire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treaſure, he has yet one jewel left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetouſneſs. Baniſh all objects of luſt, ſhut up all youth into the ſevereſt diſcipline that can be exerciſed in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaſte, that came not thither ſo: ſuch great care and wiſdom is required to the right managing of this point. Suppoſe we could expel ſin by this means; look how much we thus expel of ſin, ſo much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the ſame; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This juſtifies the high providence of God, who, though he command us temperance, juſtice, continence, yet pours out before us even to a profuſeneſs all deſirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and ſatiety. Why ſhould we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or ſcanting thoſe means, which books freely permitted are, both to the trial of virtue, and the exerciſe of truth. It would

would be better done, to learn that the law muſt needs be frivolous which goes to reſtrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good and to evil. And were I the chooſer, a dram of well-doing ſhould be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God ſure eſteems the growth and compleating of one virtuous perſon, more than the reſtraint of ten vitious. And albeit whatever thing we hear or ſee, ſitting, walking, travelling or converſing, may be fitly called our book, and is of the ſame effect that writings are; yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears, that this order hitherto is far inſufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not ſee, not once or oftner, but weekly, that continued court-libel againſt the parliament and city, printed, as the wet ſheets can witneſs, and diſperſed among us, for all that licenſing can do? Yet this is the prime ſervice a man would think, wherein this order ſhould give proof of itſelf. If it were executed, you will ſay. But certain, if execution be remiſs or blind-fold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter, and in other books? If then the order ſhall not be vain and fruſtrate, behold a new labor, Lords and Commons, ye muſt repeal and proſcribe all ſcandalous and unlicenſed books already printed and divulged; after ye have drawn them up into a liſt, that all may know which are condemned, and which not; and ordain, that no foreign books be delivered out of cuſtody, till they have been read over. This

office

office will require the whole time of not a few overſeers, and thoſe no vulgar men. There be alſo books which are partly uſeful and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will aſk as many more officials, to make expurgations and expunctions, that the commonwealth of learning be not damnified. *In fine*, when the multitude of books increaſe upon their hands, ye muſt be fain to catalogue all thoſe printers who are found frequently offending, and forbid the importation of their whole ſuſpected *typography*. In a word, that this your order may be exact, and not deficient, ye muſt reform it perfectly according to the model of *Trent* and *Sevil*, which I know ye abhor to do. Yet though ye ſhould condeſcend to this, which God forbid, the order ſtill would be but fruitleſs and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent ſects and ſchiſms, who is ſo unread or ſo uncatechiſed in ſtory, that hath not heard of many ſects refuſing books as a hindrance, and preſerving their doctrine unmixed for many ages, only by unwritten traditions. The Chriſtian faith, (for that was once a ſchiſm) is not unknown to have ſpread all over *Aſia*, ere any goſpel or epiſtle was ſeen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aimed at, look into *Italy* and *Spain*, whether thoſe places be one ſcruple the better, the honeſter, the wiſer, the chaſter, ſince all the inquiſitional rigor that hath been executed upon books.

Another reaſon, whereby to make it plain, that this order will miſs the end it ſeeks, conſider, by

by the quality which ought to be in every licenſer. It cannot be denied, but that he who is made judge to ſit upon the birth, or death of books, whether they may be waſted into this world, or not, had need to be a man above the common meaſure, both ſtudious, learned and judicious; there may be elſe no mean miſtakes in the cenſure of what is paſſable or not; which is alſo no mean injury. If he be of ſuch worth as behoves him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleaſing journey-work, a greater loſs of time levied upon his head, than to be made the perpetual reader of unchoſen books and pamphlets, oftimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unleſs at certain ſeaſons; but to be enjoined the reading of that at all times, and in a hand ſcarce legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the faireſt print, is an impoſition which I cannot believe how he that values time and his own ſtudies, or is but of a ſenſible noſtril, ſhould be able to endure. In this one thing I crave leave of the preſent licenſers to be pardoned for ſo thinking: who doubtleſs took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parliament, whoſe command perhaps made all things ſeem eaſy and unlaborious to them; but that this ſhort trial hath wearied them out already, their own expreſſions and excuſes to them who make ſo many journies to ſolicit their licenſe, are teſtimony enough. Seeing therefore thoſe who now poſſeſs the employment, by all evident ſigns wiſh themſelves

well rid of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours is ever likely to ſucceed them, except he mean to put himſelf to the ſalary of a preſs-corrector, we may eaſily foreſee what kind of licenſers we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious and remiſs, or baſely pecuniary. This is what I had to ſhew wherein this order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I, *laſtly*, proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifeſt hurt it cauſes, in being firſt the greateſt diſcouragement and affront, that can be offered to learning and to learned men. It was the complaint and lamentation of prelates, upon every leaſt breath of a motion to remove pluralities, and diſtribute more equally church revenues, that then all learning would be for ever daſhed and diſcouraged. But as for that opinion, I never found cauſe to think that the tenth part of learning ſtood or fell with the clergy: nor could I ever but hold it for a ſordid and unworthy ſpeech of any church-man who had a competency left him. If therefore ye be loth to diſhearten utterly and diſcontent, not the mercenary crew of falſe pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous ſort of ſuch as evidently were born to ſtudy, and love learning for itſelf, not for lucre, or any other end, but the ſervice of God and of truth, and perhaps that laſting fame and perpetuity of praiſe which God and good men have conſented ſhall be the reward of thoſe whoſe publiſhed labours advance the good of mankind:

mankind: then know, that ſo far to diſtruſt the judgment and the honeſty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, leaſt he ſhould drop a ſchiſm, or ſomething of corruption, is the greateſt diſpleaſure and indignity to a free and knowing ſpirit that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at ſchool, if we have only eſcaped the ferula, to come under the feſcue of an *imprimatur?* If ſerious and elaborate writings, as if they were no more than the theme of a grammar lad under his pedagogue, muſt not be uttered without the curſory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licenſer. He who is not truſted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and ſtanding to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himſelf reputed in the commonwealth wherein he was born, for other than a fool or a foreigner. When a man writes to the world, he ſummons up all his reaſon and deliberation to aſſiſt him; he ſearches, meditates, is induſtrious, and likely conſults and confers with his judicious friends; after all which done he takes himſelf to be informed in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him; if in this the moſt conſummate act of his fidelity and ripeneſs, no years, no induſtry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that ſtate of maturity, as not to be ſtill miſtruſted and ſuſpected, unleſs he carry all his conſiderate dili-

gence, all his midnight watchings and expence of *Palladian* oil, to the haſty view of an unleiſured licenſer, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulſed, or ſlighted, muſt appear in print like a puny with his guardian, and his cenſors hand on the back of his title to be his bail and ſurety, that he is no idiot, or ſeducer, it cannot be but a diſhonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning. And what if the author ſhall be one ſo copious of fancy, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after licenſing, while the book is yet under the preſs, which not ſeldom happens to the beſt and diligenteſt writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The *printer* dares not go beyond his licenſed copy; ſo often then muſt the author trudge to his leave-giver, that thoſe his new inſertions may be viewed; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licenſer, for it muſt be the ſame man, can either be found, or found at leiſure; mean while either the preſs muſt ſtand ſtill, which is no ſmall damage, or the author loſe his accurateſt thoughts, and ſend the book forth worſe than he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greateſt melancholy and vexation that can befal. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a doctor in his book as he ought to be, or elſe had better be ſilent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers,

livers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licenſer to blot or alter what preciſely accords not with the hide-bound humour, which he calls his judgment? When every acute reader upon the firſt ſight of a pedantic licenſe, will be ready with theſe like words to ding the book a coit's diſtance from him, I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an inſtructor that comes to me under the wardſhip of an overſeeing fiſt. I know nothing of the licenſer, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who ſhall warrant me his judgment? The ſtate, ſir, replies the *ſtationer*, but has a quick return, The ſtate ſhall be my governors, but not my critics; they may be miſtaken in the choice of a licenſer, as eaſily as this licenſer may be miſtaken in an author: this is ſome common ſtuff; and he might add from Sir *Francis Bacon*, that *ſuch authorized books are but the language of the times*. For though a licenſer ſhould happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next ſucceſſion, yet his very office, and his commiſſion enjoins him, to let paſs nothing but what is vulgarly received already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceaſed author, though never ſo famous in his lifetime, and even to this day, come to their hands for licenſe to be printed, or reprinted, if there be found in his book one ſentence of a ventrous edge, uttered in the height of zeal, and who knows, whether it might not be the dictate of a divine ſpirit, yet not ſuiting with every low decrepid hu-

mour of their own, though it were *Knox* himſelf, the reformer of a kingdom that ſpake it, they will not pardon him their daſh: the ſenſe of that great man ſhall to all poſterity be loſt for the fearfulneſs or the preſumptuous raſhneſs of a perfunctory licenſer. And to what an author this violence hath been lately done, and in what book of greateſt conſequence to be faithfully publiſhed, I could now inſtance, but ſhall forbear till a more convenient ſeaſon. Yet if theſe things be not reſented ſeriouſly and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that ſuch iron-moulds as theſe ſhall have authority to gnaw out the choiceſt periods of exquiſiteſt books, and to commit ſuch a treacherous fraud againſt the orphan remainders of worthieſt men after death, the more ſorrow will belong to that hapleſs race of men, whoſe misfortune it is to have underſtanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly-wiſe; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and ſlothful, to be a common ſtedfaſt dunce, will be the only pleaſant life, and only in requeſt.

And as it is a particular diſeſteem of every knowing perſon alive, and moſt injurious to the written labours and monuments of the dead, ſo to me it ſeems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation. I cannot ſet ſo light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and ſolid judgment which is in *England*, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good ſoever,

ſoever, much leſs that it ſhould not paſs except their ſuperintendence be over it, except it be ſifted and ſtrained with their ſtrainers, that it ſhould be uncurrent without their manual ſtamp. Truth and underſtanding are not ſuch wares as to be monopolized and traded in by tickets and ſtatutes and ſtandards. We muſt not think to make a ſtaple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and licenſe it like our broad-cloth and our wool-packs. What is it but a ſervitude like that impoſed by the *Philiſtines*, not to be allowed the ſharpening of our own axes and coulters, but we muſt repair from all quarters to twenty licenſing forges. Had any one written and divulged erroneous things and ſcandalous to honeſt life, miſuſing and forfeiting the eſteem had of his reaſon among men, if after conviction this only cenſure were adjudged him, that he ſhould never henceforth write, but what were firſt examined by an appointed officer, whoſe hand ſhould be annexed to paſs his credit for him, that now he might be ſafely read, it could not be apprehended leſs than a diſgraceful puniſhment. Whence to include the whole nation, and thoſe that never yet thus offended, under ſuch a diffident and ſuſpectful prohibition, may plainly be underſtood what a diſparagement it is. So much the more, whenas debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffenſive books muſt not ſtir forth without a viſible jailor in their title. Nor is it to the common people leſs than a reproach; for if we be ſo jealous over

them, as that we dare not truſt them with an *Engliſh* pamphlet, what do we but cenſure them for a giddy, vicious and ungrounded people; in ſuch a ſick and weak eſtate of faith and diſcretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licenſer. That this is care or love of them we cannot prètend, whenas in thoſe *Popiſh* places where the *laity* are moſt hated and deſpiſed, the ſame ſtrictneſs is uſed over them. Wiſdom we cannot call it, becauſe it ſtops but one breach of licenſe, nor that neither; whenas thoſe corruptions, which it ſeeks to prevent, break in faſter at other doors which cannot be ſhut.

And in concluſion it reflects to the diſrepute of our miniſters alſo, of whoſe labours we ſhould hope better, and of the proficiency which their flock reaps by them, than that after all this light of the goſpel, which is, and is to be, and all this continual preaching, they ſhould be ſtill frequented with ſuch an unprincipled, unedified and laic rabble, as that the whiff of every new pamphlet ſhould ſtagger them out of their catechiſm and Chriſtian walking. This may have much reaſon to diſcourage the miniſters, when ſuch a low conceit is had of all their exhortations, and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned looſe to three ſheets of paper without a licenſer; that all the ſermons, all the lectures preached, printed, vended in ſuch numbers and ſuch volumes, as have now well nigh made all other books unſaleable, ſhould not be armour enough

enough againſt one ſingle *Enchiridion*, without the caſtle St. *Angelo* of an *IMPRIMATUR*.

And leaſt ſome ſhould perſuade ye, Lords and Commons, that theſe arguments of learned mens' diſcouragement at this your order, are meer flouriſhes, and not real, I could recount what I have ſeen and heard in other countries, where this kind of inquiſition tyrannizes; when I have ſat among their learned men, for that honour I had, and been counted happy to be born in ſuch a place of *philoſophic* freedom, as they ſuppoſed *England* was, while themſelves did nothing but bemoan the ſervile condition into which learning amongſt them was brought; that this was it which had dampt the glory of *Italian* wits; that nothing had been there written now theſe many years but flattery and fuſtian. There it was that I found and viſited the famous *Galileo* grown old, a priſoner to the inquiſition, for thinking in aſtronomy otherwiſe than the *Franciſcan* and *Dominican* licenſers thought. And though I knew that *England* then was groaning loudeſt under the *prelatical* yoke, nevertheleſs I took it as a pledge of future happineſs, that other nations were ſo perſuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that thoſe worthies were then breathing in her air, who ſhould be her leaders to ſuch a deliverance, as ſhall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finiſh. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered

againſt

againſt the inquiſition, the ſame I ſhould hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament againſt an order of licenſing; and that ſo generally, that when I had diſcloſed myſelf a companion of their diſcontent, I might ſay, if without envy, that he whom an honeſt *queſtorſhip* had indeared to the *Sicilians*, was not more by them importuned againſt *Verres*, than the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye, and are known and reſpected by ye, loaded me with intreaties and perſuaſions, that I would not deſpair to lay together that which juſt reaſon ſhould bring into my mind, toward the removal of an undeſerved thraldom upon learning. That this is not therefore the diſburthening of a particular fancy, but the common grievance of all thoſe who had prepared their minds and ſtudies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may ſatisfy. And in their name I ſhall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the general murmur is; that if it come to inquiſitioning again and licenſing, and that we are ſo timorous of ourſelves, and ſo ſuſpicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the ſhaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are, if ſome, who but of late were little better than ſilenced from preaching, ſhall come now to ſilence us from reading, except what they pleaſe, it cannot be gueſſed what is intended by ſome but a ſecond tyranny over learning: and will ſoon put it out of controverſy, that biſhops and *preſbyters* are the

ſame

ſame to us, both name and thing. That thoſe evils of *prelaty*, which before from five or ſix and twenty ſees were diſtributively charged upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon learning, is not obſcure to us: whenas now the paſtor of a ſmall unlearned pariſh on the ſudden ſhall be exalted archbiſhop over a large dioceſe of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a myſtical pluraliſt. He who but of late cried down the ſole ordination of every novice bachelor of art, and denied ſole juriſdiction over the ſimpleſt pariſhioner, ſhall now at home in his private chair aſſume both theſe over worthieſt and excellenteſt books and ableſt authors that writ them. This is not, ye covenants and proteſtations that we have made! this is not to put down *prelaty*, this is but to chop an epiſcopacy, this is but to tranſlate the palace *Metropolitan* from one kind of dominion into another, this but an old canonical ſlight of *commuting* our penance. To ſtartle thus betimes at a meer unlicenſed pamphlet, will after a while be afraid of every conventicle, and a while after will make a conventicle of every Chriſtian meeting. But I am certain, that a ſtate governed by the rules of juſtice and fortitude, or a church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be ſo puſillanimous. While things are yet not conſtituted in religion, that freedom of writing ſhould be reſtrained by a diſcipline imitated from the *prelates*, and learnt by them from the inquiſition to ſhut us up all again into the breaſt of a licenſer,

licenſer, muſt needs give cauſe of doubt and diſcouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but diſcern the fineneſs of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers; that while biſhops were to be baited down, then all preſſes might be open; it was the people's birth-right and privilege in time of Parliament, it was the breaking forth of light. But now the biſhops abrogated and voided out of the church, as if our reformation ſought no more, but to make room for others into their ſeats under another name; the epiſcopal arts begin to bud again, the cruiſe of truth muſt run no more oil, liberty of printing muſt be enthralled again under a prelatical commiſſion of twenty; the privilege of the people nullified, and which is worſe, the freedom of learning muſt groan again, and to her old fetters: all this the Parliament yet ſitting. Although their own late arguments and defences againſt the *prelates* might remember them, that this obſtructing violence meets for the moſt part with an event utterly oppoſite to the end which it drives at: inſtead of ſuppreſſing ſects and ſchiſms, it raiſes them and inveſts them with a reputation: *The puniſhing of wits enhances their authority*, ſaith the Viſcount St. *Albans, and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain ſpark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who ſeek to tread it out.* This order therefore may prove a nurſing mother to ſects, but I ſhall eaſily ſhew how it will be a ſtep-dame to truth: and firſt by diſenabling us to the maintenance of what is known already.

Well

Well knows he, who uſes to conſider, that our faith and knowledge thrive by exerciſe, as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth is compared in ſcripture to a ſtreaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progreſſion, they ſicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a *Heretic* in the truth; and if he believe things only, becauſe his paſtor ſays ſo, or the aſſembly ſo determines, without knowing other reaſon, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his hereſy. There is not any burthen that ſome would gladlier poſt off to another, than the charge and care of their religion. There be, who knows not that there be, of proteſtants and profeſſors who live and die in as errant an implicit faith, as any lay-papiſt of *Loretto*. A wealthy man addicted to his pleaſure and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic ſo entangled and of ſo many piddling accounts; that of all myſteries he cannot ſkill to keep a ſtock going upon that trade. What ſhould he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore, but reſolves to give over toiling and to find himſelf out ſome factor, to whoſe care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; ſome divine of note and eſtimation that muſt be. To him he adheres, reſigns the whole warehouſe of his religion, with all the locks and keys into his cuſtody; and indeed makes the very perſon of that man his religion; eſteems

his

his aſſociating with him a ſufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may ſay his religion is now no more within himſelf, but is become a dividual moveable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the houſe. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feaſts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally ſupt, and ſumptuouſly laid to ſleep, riſes, is ſaluted, and after the malmſey, or ſome well ſpiced bruage, and better breakfaſted, than he whoſe morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between *Bethany* and *Jeruſalem*; his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the ſhop trading all day without his religion.

Another ſort there be, who when they hear that all things ſhall be ordered, all things regulated and ſettled, nothing written but what paſſes through the cuſtom-houſe of certain *publicans* that have the tunnaging and the poundaging of all free ſpoken truth, will ſtrait give themſelves up into your hands, make them and cut them out what religion ye pleaſe; there be delights, there be recreations and jolly paſtimes that will fetch the day about from ſun to ſun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have taken ſo ſtrictly, and ſo unalterably into their own purveying? Theſe are the fruits which a dull eaſe and ceſſation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wiſhed were

were ſuch an obedient unanimity as this? what a fine conformity would it ſtarch us all into? doubtleſs a ſtaunch and ſolid piece of frame-work, as any *January* could freeze together.

Nor much better will be the conſequence even among the clergy themſelves; it is no new thing never heard of before, for a *parochial* miniſter, who has his reward, and is at his *Hercules* pillars in a warm benefice, to be eaſily inclinable, if he have nothing elſe that may rouſe up his ſtudies, to finiſh his circuit in an *Engliſh* concordance and a *topic folio*, the gatherings and ſavings of a ſober graduateſhip, a *harmony* and a *catena*, treading the conſtant round of certain common doctrinal heads, attended with their uſes, motives, marks and means, out of which as out of an alphabet, or *ſolfa*, by forming and transforming, joining and diſjoining variouſly a little bookcraft, and two hours meditation might furniſh him unſpeakably to the performance of more than a weekly charge of ſermoning: not to reckon up the infinite helps of interlinearies, breviaries, *ſynopſes*, and other loitering gear. But as for the multitude of ſermons ready printed and piled up, on every text that is not difficult, our *London* trading St. *Thomas* in his veſtry, and add to boot St. *Martin* and St. *Hugh*, have not within their hallowed limits more vendible ware of all ſorts ready made: ſo that penury he never need fear of pulpit proviſion, having where ſo plenteouſly to refreſh his magazine. But if his rear and flanks be not impaled, if his back door be not ſecured by the

the rigid licenſer, but that a bold book may now and then iſſue forth, and give the aſſault to ſome of his old collections in their trenches, it will concern him then to keep waking, to ſtand in watch, to ſet good guards and ſentinels about his received opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inſpectors, fearing leaſt any of his flock be ſeduced, who alſo then would be better inſtructed, better exerciſed and diſciplined. And God ſend that the fear of this diligence which muſt then be uſed, do not make us affect the lazineſs of a licenſing church.

For if we be ſure we are in the right, and do not hold the truth guiltily, which becomes not, if we ourſelves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching and the people for an untaught and irreligious gadding rout, what can be more fair, than when a man judicious, learned, and of a conſcience, for aught we know, as good as theirs that taught us what we know, ſhall not privily from houſe to houſe, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing publiſh to the world what his opinion is, what his reaſons, and wherefore that which is now thought cannot be ſound. Chriſt urged it as wherewith to juſtify himſelf, that he preached in public; yet writing is more public than preaching; and more eaſy to refutation, if need be, there being ſo many, whoſe buſineſs and profeſſion meerly it is, to be the champions of truth; which, if they neglect what can be imputed but their ſloth or inability?

Thus

Thus much we are hindered and diſinured by this courſe of licenſing toward the true knowledge of what we ſeem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licenſers themſelves in the calling of their miniſtry, more than any ſecular employment, if they will diſcharge that office as they ought, ſo that of neceſſity they muſt neglect either the one duty or the other; I inſiſt not, becauſe it is a particular, but leave it to their own conſcience, how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purpoſed to lay open, the incredible loſs and detriment that this plot of licenſing puts us to, more than if ſome enemy at ſea ſhould ſtop up all our havens and ports and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richeſt merchandize, truth: nay, it was firſt eſtabliſhed and put in practice by Antichriſtian malice and myſtery on ſet purpoſe to extinguiſh, if it were poſſible, the light of reformation, and to ſettle falſhood; little differing from that policy wherewith the *Turk* upholds his *alcoran*, by the prohibition of printing. It is not denied, but gladly confeſt, we are to ſend our thanks and vows to heaven, louder than moſt of nations, for that great meaſure of truth which we enjoy, eſpecially in thoſe main points between us and the Pope, with his appertinences, the *prelates:* but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attained the utmoſt proſpect of reformation, that the mortal glaſs wherein we contemplate, can ſhew us, till we come to *beatific* viſion, that man by this

very opinion declares, that he is yet far ſhort of truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine maſter, and was a perfect ſhape moſt glorious to look on: but when he aſcended, and his apoſtles after him were laid aſleep, then ſtraight aroſe a wicked race of deceivers, who as that ſtory goes of the *Egyptian Typhon*, with his conſpirators, how they dealt with the good *Oſiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thouſand pieces, and ſcattered them to the four winds. From that time ever ſince, the ſad friends of Truth, ſuch as durſt appear, imitating the careful ſearch, that *Iſis* made for the mangled body of *Oſiris*, went up and down gathering up limb by limb ſtill as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever ſhall do till her maſter's ſecond coming; he ſhall bring together every joint and member, and ſhall mould them into an immortal feature of lovelineſs and perfection. Suffer not theſe licenſing prohibitions to ſtand at every place of opportunity forbidding and diſturbing them that continue ſeeking, that continue to do our obſequies to the torn body of our martyred ſaint. We boaſt our light; but if we look not wiſely on the ſun itſelf, it ſmites us into darkneſs. Who can diſcern thoſe planets that are oft *combuſt*, and thoſe ſtars of brighteſt magnitude that riſe and ſet with the ſun, until the oppoſite motion of their orbs bring them to ſuch a place in the firmament, where they may be ſeen evening

or

or morning. The light which we have gained, was given us, not to be ever ſtaring on, but by it to diſcover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a prieſt, the unmitring of a biſhop, and the removing him from off the *Preſbyterian* ſhoulders that will make us a happy nation, no, if other things as great in the church, and in the rule of life both œconomical and political be not looked into and reformed, we have looked ſo long upon the blaze that *Zuinglius* and *Calvin* hath beckoned up to us, that we are ſtark blind. There be, who perpetually complain of ſchiſms and ſects, and make it ſuch a calamity, that any man diſſents from their maxims. It is their own pride and ignorance which cauſes the diſturbing, who neither will hear with meekneſs, nor can convince, yet all muſt be ſuppreſſed which is not found in their *Syntagma*. They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite thoſe diſſevered pieces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be ſtill ſearching what we know not, by what we know, ſtill cloſing up Truth to Truth as we find it (for all her body is *homogeneal* and *proportional*) this is the golden rule in *theology* as well in *arithmetic*, and makes up the beſt harmony in as a church; not the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of *England*, conſider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not ſlow and dull, but

of a quick, ingenious and piercing ſpirit, acute to invent, ſubtle and ſinewy to diſcourſe, not beneath the reach of any point, the higheſt that human capacity can ſoar to. Therefore the ſtudies of learning in her deepeſt ſciences have been ſo ancient and ſo eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity and able judgment, have been perſuaded that even the ſchool of *Pythagoras* and the *Perſian* wiſdom took beginning from the old philoſophy of this iſland. And that wiſe and civil *Roman*, *Julius Agricola*, who governed once here for *Cæſar*, preferred the natural wits of *Britain*, before the laboured ſtudies of the *French*. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal *Tranſylvanian* ſends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of *Ruſſia*, and beyond the *Hercynian* wilderneſs, not their youth, but their ſtayed men, to learn our language, and our *theologic* arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why elſe was this nation choſen before any other, that out of her, as out of *Sion*, ſhould be proclaimed and ſounded forth the firſt tidings and trumpet of reformation to all *Europe*. And had it not been the obſtinate perverſeneſs of our prelates againſt the divine and admirable ſpirit of *Wickliff*, to ſuppreſs him as a *ſchiſmatic* and *innovator*, perhaps neither the *Bohemian Huſſe* and *Jerom*, no nor the name of *Luther*, or of *Calvin*, had been ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours

had

had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned the matter, we are become hitherto the lateſt and the backwardeſt ſcholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of ſigns, and by the general inſtinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and ſolemnly expreſs their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin ſome new and great period in his church, even to the reforming of reformation itſelf: what does he then but reveal himſelf to his ſervants, and as his manner is, *firſt*, to his *Engliſh*-men? I ſay, as his manner is, *firſt* to us, though we mark not the method of his counſels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vaſt city; a city of refuge, the manſion-houſe of liberty, encompaſſed and ſurrounded with his protection; the ſhop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working to faſhion out the plates and inſtruments of armed juſtice in defence of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, ſitting by their ſtudious lamps, muſing, ſearching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to preſent, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching reformation: others as faſt reading, trying all things, aſſenting to the force of reaſon and convincement. What could a man require more from a nation ſo pliant and ſo prone to ſeek after knowledge? What wants there to ſuch a towardly and pregnant ſoil, but wiſe and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of ſages and of worthies? We

reckon more than five months yet to harveſt; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much deſire to learn, there of neceſſity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under theſe fantaſtic terrors of ſect and ſchiſm, we wrong the earneſt and zealous thirſt after knowledge and underſtanding which God hath ſtirred up in this city. What ſome lament of, we rather ſhould rejoice at, ſhould rather praiſe this pious forwardneſs among men, to re-aſſume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and ſome grain of charity might win all theſe diligences, to join and unite into one general and brotherly ſearch after truth; could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crouding free conſciences and Chriſtian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if ſome great and worthy ſtranger ſhould come among us, wiſe to diſcern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, obſerving the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reaſonings in the purſuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as *Pyrrhus* did, admiring the *Roman* docility and courage; if ſuch were my *Epirots*, I would not deſpair the greateſt deſign that could be attempted to make a church or kingdom happy. Yet theſe are the men cried out againſt for *ſchiſmatics* and

ſectaries,

ſectaries, as if, while the temple of the Lord was building, ſome cutting, ſome ſquaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there ſhould be a ſort of irrational men who could not conſider there muſt be many ſchiſms and many diſſections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the houſe of God can be built. And when every ſtone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world: neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay, rather the perfection conſiſts in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly diſſimilitudes that are not vaſtly diſproportional, ariſes the goodly and the graceful *ſymmetry* that commends the whole pile and ſtructure. Let us therefore be more conſiderate builders, more wiſe in ſpiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time ſeems come, wherein *Moſes* the great prophet may ſit in heaven rejoicing to ſee that memorable and glorious wiſh of his fulfilled, when not only our ſeventy elders, but all the Lord's people are become prophets. No marvel then though ſome men, and ſome good men too perhaps, but young in goodneſs, as *Joſhua* then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weakneſs are in agony, leaſt theſe diviſions and ſubdiviſions will undo us. The adverſary again applauds and waits the hour; when they have branched themſelves out, ſaith he, ſmall enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he ſees not the firm root, out of which we

all grow, though into branches; nor will beware until he ſee our ſmall divided maniples cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unweildy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all theſe ſuppoſed ſects and ſchiſms, and that we ſhall not need that ſolicitude, honeſt perhaps, though over timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but ſhall laugh in the end, at thoſe malicious applauders of our differences, I have theſe reaſons to perſuade me.

Firſt, when a city ſhall be as it were beſieged and blocked about, her navigable river infeſted, inroads and incurſions round, defiance and battle oft rumoured to be marching up even to her walls and ſuburb trenches; that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the ſtudy of higheſt and moſt important matters to be reformed, ſhould be diſputing, reaſoning, reading, inventing, diſcourſing, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before diſcourſed or written of, argues *firſt*, a ſingular good will, contentedneſs and confidence in your prudent foreſight, and ſafe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itſelf to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no ſmall number of as great ſpirits among us, as his was, who when *Rome* was nigh beſieged by *Hanibal*, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himſelf encamped his own regiment. Next, it is a lively and chearful preſage of our happy

happy ſucceſs and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is freſh, the ſpirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and thoſe in the acuteſt and the perteſt operations of wit and ſubtlety, it argues in what good plight and conſtitution the body is; ſo when the chearfulneſs of the people is ſo ſprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well it's own freedom and ſafety, but to ſpare, and to beſtow upon the ſolideſt and ſublimeſt points of controverſy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated nor drooping to a fatal decay, but caſting off the old and wrinkled ſkin of corruption to outlive theſe pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and proſperous virtue, deſtined to become great and honourable in theſe latter ages. Methinks I ſee, in my mind, a noble and puiſſant nation rouſing herſelf, like a ſtrong man after ſleep, and ſhaking her invincible locks: methinks I ſee her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazled eyes at the full mid-day beam; purging and unſealing her long abuſed ſight at the fountain itſelf, of heavenly radiance; while the whole [1]noiſe of timorous and [2]flocking birds, with thoſe alſo that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what ſhe means, and in their envious gabble would prognoſticate a year of ſects and ſchiſms.

What ſhould ye do then, ſhould ye ſuppreſs all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light, ſprung up and yet ſpringing daily in this city? ſhould

ſhould ye ſet an *oligarchy* of twenty ingroſſers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we ſhall know nothing but what is meaſured to us by their buſhel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counſel ye to ſuch a ſuppreſſing, do as good as bid you ſuppreſs yourſelves; and I will ſoon ſhew how. If it be deſired to know the immediate cauſe of all this free writing and free ſpeaking, there cannot be aſſigned a truer than your own mild, and free, and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counſels have purchaſed us; liberty which is the nurſe of all great wits: this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our ſpirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchiſed, enlarged and lifted up our apprehenſions, degrees above themſelves. Ye cannot make us now leſs capable, leſs knowing, leſs eagerly purſuing of the truth, unleſs ye firſt make yourſelves, that made us ſo, leſs the lovers, leſs the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutiſh, formal and ſlaviſh, as ye found us; but you then muſt firſt become that which ye cannot be, oppreſſive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts now more erected to the ſearch and expectation of greateſt and exacteſt things, is the iſſue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot ſuppreſs that, unleſs ye reinforce an abrogated and mercileſs law, that fathers may diſpatch at will their

their own children. And who ſhall then ſtick cloſeſt to ye, and excite others? Not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct, and his four nobles of *Danegelt*. Although I diſpraiſe not the defence of juſt immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conſcience, above all liberties.

What would be beſt adviſed then, if it be found ſo hurtful and ſo unequal to ſuppreſs opinions for the newneſs, or the unſuitableneſs to a cuſtomary acceptance, will not be my taſk to ſay; I only ſhall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not ſacrificed his life and fortunes to the church and commonwealth, we had not now miſt and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him, I am ſure; yet I for honours ſake, and may it be eternal to him, ſhall name him, the Lord *Brook*. He writing of epiſcopacy, and by the way treating of ſects and ſchiſms, left ye his vote, or rather now the laſt words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honoured regard with ye, ſo full of meekneſs and breathing charity, that next to his laſt teſtament, who bequeathed love and peace to his diſciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility thoſe, however they be miſcalled, that deſire to live purely, in ſuch a uſe of God's ordinances as the beſt guid-

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ance of their conſcience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in ſome diſconformity to ourſelves. The book itſelf will tell us more at large, being publiſhed to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deſerves, that what advice he left, be not laid by without peruſal.

And now the time in ſpecial is, by privilege to write and ſpeak what may help to the further diſcuſſing of matters in agitation. The temple of *Janus*, with his two *controverſal* faces, might now not unſignificantly be ſet open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let looſe to play upon the earth, ſo Truth be in the field, we do injuriouſly by licenſing and prohibiting to miſdoubt her ſtrength. Let her and Falſhood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worſe, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the beſt and ſureſt ſuppreſſing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clear knowledge to be ſent down among us, would think of other matters to be conſtituted beyond the diſcipline of *Geneva*, framed and fabricked already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for, ſhines in upon us, there be who envy and oppoſe, if it come not firſt in at their caſements. What a colluſion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wiſe man to uſe diligence, "*to ſeek "for wiſdom as for hidden treaſures*" early and late, that another order ſhall enjoin us, to know nothing but by ſtatute? When a man hath been labouring the hardeſt labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath

hath furniſhed out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reaſons as it were a battle ranged, ſcattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adverſary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and ſun, if he pleaſe, only that he may try the matter by dint of argument; for his opponents then to ſculk, to lay ambuſhments, to keep a narrow bridge of licenſing where the challenger ſhould paſs, though it be valour enough in ſoldierſhip, is but weakneſs and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not, that truth is ſtrong, next to the Almighty; ſhe needs no policies, nor ſtratagems, nor licenſings to make her victorious, thoſe are the ſhifts and the defences that error uſes againſt her power: give her but room, and do not bind her when ſhe ſleeps, for then ſhe ſpeaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who ſpake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather ſhe turns herſelf into all ſhapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before *Ahab*, until ſhe be adjured into her own likeneſs. Yet is it not impoſſible that ſhe may have more ſhapes than one. What elſe is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this ſide or on the other, without being unlike herſelf? What but a vain ſhadow elſe is the abolition of "*thoſe ordinances, that hand-writing nailed to the* "*croſs?*" what great purchaſe is this Chriſtian liberty which *Paul* ſo often boaſts of? His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day or

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regards it not, may do either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conſcience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief ſtrong hold of our hypocriſy to be ever judging one another? I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a ſlaviſh print upon our necks; the ghoſt of a linen decency yet haunts us. We ſtumble, and are impatient at the leaſt dividing of one viſible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardneſs to ſuppreſs, and our backwardneſs to recover any enthralled piece of truth out of the gripe of cuſtom, we care not to keep Truth ſeparated from Truth, which is the fierceſt rent and diſunion of all. We do not ſee that while we ſtill affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as ſoon fall again into a groſs conforming ſtupidity, a ſtark and dead congealment of "*wood* "*and hay and ſtubble*" forced and frozen together, which is more to the ſudden degenerating of a church than many *ſubdichotomies* of petty ſchiſms. Not that I can think well of every light ſeparation, or that all in a church is to be expected "*gold and ſil-* "*ver and precious ſtones:*" it is not poſſible for man to ſever the wheat from the tares, the good fiſh from the other fry; that muſt be the angels miniſtry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they ſhould be? this doubtleſs is more wholeſome, more prudent, and more Chriſtian, that many be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated popery, and

open

open ſuperſtition, which as it extirpates all religions and civil ſupremacies, ſo itſelf ſhould be extirpate, provided firſt that all charitable and compaſſionate means be uſed to win and regain the weak and the miſled: that alſo which is impious or evil abſolutely either againſt faith or manners, no law can poſſibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itſelf: but thoſe neighbouring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I ſpeak of, whether in ſome point of doctrine or of diſcipline, which, though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of ſpirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*. In the mean while, if any one would write, and bring his helpful hand to the ſlow-moving reformation which we labour under, if Truth have ſpoken to him before others, or but ſeemed at leaſt to ſpeak, who hath ſo *be-jeſuited* us that we ſhould trouble that man with aſking licenſe to do ſo worthy a deed? And not conſider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited than Truth itſelf: whoſe firſt appearance to our eyes, bleared and dimmed with prejudice and cuſtom, is more unſightly and unplauſible than many errors; even as the perſon is of many a great man, ſlight and contemptible to ſee to. And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none muſt be heard, but whom they like, is the worſt and neweſt opinion of all others; and is the chief cauſe, why ſects and ſchiſms do ſo much abound, and true knowledge is kept at diſtance from us; beſides

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yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God ſhakes a kingdom, with ſtrong and healthful commotions, to a general reforming, it is not untrue that many ſectaries and falſe teachers are then buſieſt in ſeducing. But yet more true it is, that God then raiſes to his own work men of rare abilities, and more than common induſtry not only to look back and reviſe what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on, ſome new enlightened ſteps in the diſcovery of Truth. For ſuch is the order of God's enlightning his church, to diſpenſe and deal out by degrees his beam, ſo as our earthly eyes may beſt ſuſtain it. Neither is God appointed and confined, where and out of what place theſe his choſen ſhall be firſt heard to ſpeak; for he ſees not as man ſees, chooſes not as man chooſes, leaſt we ſhould devote ourſelves again to ſet places, and aſſemblies, and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old convocation houſe, and another while in the chapel at *Weſtminſter*; when all the faith and religion that ſhall be there canonized, is not ſufficient, without plain convincement, and the charity of patient inſtruction, to ſupple the leaſt bruiſe of conſcience, to edify the meaneſt Chriſtian, who deſires to walk in the ſpirit, and not in the letter of human truſt, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no, though *Henry* the ſeventh, himſelf there, with all his leige tombs about him, ſhould lend them voices from the dead, to ſwell their number. And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading

ing ſchiſmatics, what with-holds us but our ſloth, our ſelf-will, and diſtruſt in the right cauſe, that we do not give them gentle meetings and gentle diſmiſſions, that we debate not and examine the matter thoroughly with liberal and frequent audience; if not for their ſakes, yet for our own? Seeing no man who hath taſted learning, but will confeſs the many ways of profiting by thoſe who, not contented with ſtale receipts, are able to manage and ſet forth new poſitions to the world. And were they but as the duſt and cinders of our feet, ſo long as in that notion they may yet ſerve to poliſh and brighten the armoury of Truth, even for that reſpect they were not utterly to be caſt away. But if they be of thoſe whom God hath fitted for the ſpecial uſe of theſe times, with eminent and ample gifts, and thoſe perhaps neither among the prieſts, nor among the Phariſees, and we in the haſte of a precipitant zeal ſhall make no diſtinction, but reſolve to ſtop their mouths, becauſe we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we underſtand them; no leſs than woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the goſpel, we are found the perſecutors!

There have been not a few ſince the beginning of this Parliament, both of the *Preſbytery* and others, who by their unlicenſed books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur*, firſt broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to ſee day: I hope that none of thoſe were the perſuaders, to renew upon us this bondage which they

themſelves have wrought ſo much good by contemning. But if neither the check that *Moſes* gave to young *Joſhua*, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young *John*, who was ſo ready to prohibit thoſe whom he thought unlicenſed, be not enough to admoniſh our elders how unacceptable to God their teſty mood of prohibiting is; if neither their own remembrance what evil hath abounded in the church by this lett of licenſing, and what good they themſelves have begun by tranſgreſſing, be not enough; but that they will perſuade and execute the moſt *dominican* part of the inquiſition over us, and are already with one foot in the ſtirrup ſo active at ſuppreſſing, it would be no unequal diſtribution in the firſt place to ſuppreſs the ſuppreſſors themſelves; whom the change of their condition hath puft up, more than their late experience of harder times hath made wiſe.

And as for regulating the preſs, let no man think to have the honour of adviſing ye better than yourſelves have done in that order publiſhed next before this, "that no book be printed, unleſs the "printers and the author's name, or at leaſt the printer's be regiſtered." Thoſe which otherwiſe come forth, if they be found miſchievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timelieſt and the moſt effectual remedy, that mans' prevention can uſe. For this *authentic Spaniſh* policy of licenſing books, if I have ſaid ought, will prove the moſt unlicenſed book itſelf within a ſhort while; and was the immediate image of a ſtar-chamber decree

decree to that purpoſe made in thoſe very time when that court did the reſt of thoſe her pio works, for which ſhe is now fallen from the ſta with *Lucifer*. Whereby ye may gueſs what kin of ſtate prudence, what love of the people, wha care of religion, or good manners, there was at th contriving, although with ſingular hypocriſy it pre tended to bind books to their good behaviou And how it got the upper hand of your preceden order ſo well conſtituted before, if we may believ thoſe men whoſe profeſſion gives them cauſe t enquire moſt, it may be doubted there was in the fraud of ſome old *patentees* and *monopolizers* i the trade of *bookſelling*; who, under pretence c the poor in their company not to be defrauded, an the juſt retaining of each man his ſeveral copy (which God forbid ſhould be gainſaid,) brough divers gloſing colours to the houſe, which were in deed but colours, and ſerving to no end except it b to exerciſe a ſuperiority over their neighbours men who do not therefore labour in an honeſt pro feſſion, to which learning is indebted, that they ſhould be made other mens vaſſals. Another end is thought was aimed at by ſome of them in pro curing by petition this order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the eaſier ſcape abroad, as the event ſhews. But of theſe *ſophiſms* and *elenchs* of merchandize I ſkill not: this I know that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almoſt incident; for what magiſtrate may not be miſinformed, and much the ſooner, if li-

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